



The fourth Pathways to Independence initiative welcomes new workers to the Marriott.

Rick Zeolla, General Manager of the The Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino was happy to welcome sixteen new participants to the resort's "Pathways to Independence" program on Monday morning. This initiative, which was instigated by the Marriott chain in 1990, has been in practice in Aruba for four years. This partnership with the Directie Sociale Zaken, and the Ministry of Social Affairs provide the opportunity for individuals currently on the welfare rolls to find not only jobs, but new skills through on the job training as well.

"I think this program is a good example of how the public and private sector can work together in accomplishing successful projects and making Aruba a better place. I strongly encourage other companies on our island to follow this example," expressed Rick Zeolla. Joining the new trainees along with thefor a buffet breakfast in the ballroom of the Marriott were the full time employees that had successfully completed their training, Director of Human resources Cory Guest and Manager of Human Resources Tim Matthew. Also present to welcome them were Marriott's Training Manager Hely Regales, who will oversee the candidates during the next six weeks, Stanley Heinze, Director of the Social Zaken, and Minister of Social Affairs, Marisol Lopez-Tromp.

Minister Tromp is an enthusiastic supporter of this program "I am very happy with the cooperation between the Marriott and the island government. When the Marriott approached us with this initiative a few years ago, we felt it would be very worthwhile, as it gives the people on welfare a chance. The training program is particularly important; as a number are years without working and rather shy, and the six-week program is not only about skills, but also motivation, and budgeting to fit one's income. It is teaching them not only to get the job, but also to maintain the job. This is very important, otherwise they would go back to welfare, and that is not the goal. For the government it is an excellent partnership as it not only reduces welfare costs, but the people achieve our ultimate goal, which is a better quality of life."

Stanley Heinze of the Directie Social Zaken agrees with Minister Tromp's assessment of the Pathways to Independence. "I love this program, and have found it to be very successful. It helps to break the welfare cycle. The candidates get a chance for for not only temporary work, but instead a permanent position with security and benefits. The essential part of the training is not only the skills learned, which they love, it also helps them to surpass the "welfare rhythm." It teaches the daily habit that is needed, the mentality of getting up in the morning and going to work, what we call the "natural labor rhythm." This is a very important part of keeping a job, teaching them to focus on doing their job. The program offers these people self-esteem and helps them to realize 'I AM somebody, and I can do something;' to make them more productive members of the island society."

Tim Matthew reports that the graduates of the program are "excellent workers," and that the Department of Human Resources is more than pleased with their job performance. A number of the candidates also come from the ranks of the physically and mentally challenged, and their execution of their duties more than meets the high standards required from the Marriot chain.

On Monday morning, the management welcomed Yiseth Medina, Julissa Rodriguez, Gianina Gomez, Solayca Everon, Madeleyne Arreindell, Joan Geerman, Juliska Tromo, Enid Delle, Rafaela Pers, Judith Maduro, Prisca Jones, Jerischka Albertsz, Norinda Gomez, Karenza Ferrer-Wever, Cecikia Hennep and Oscar Wernet to the Marriott "family," and wished them success in this positive step in taking command of their lives.